

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 OMB-01 SSC-01 /058 W
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R 271028Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2975

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 6005

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION NEW DELHI INFO BOMBAY AND CALCUTTA
FROM MADRAS APRIL 26, 1977 REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MADRAS 0702

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IN
SUBJECT: A. K. ANTONY NEW KERALA CHIEF MINISTER

REF: MADRAS 0647

1. IT WAS ANNOUNCED IN KERALA ON APRIL 25 THAT KPCC PRESIDENT
A. K. ANTONY WILL TAKE OVER AS CHIEF MINISTER OF KERALA
SUCCEEDING K. KARUNAKARAN WHO WAS FORCED OUT OF OFFICE
FOLLOWING TMK KERALA HIGH COURT'S INDICTMENT OF HIS CONDUCT
IN THE CASE RELATING TO THE MISSING ENGINEERING COLLEGE
STUDENT RAJAN. ANTONY, WHO REPORTEDLY ACCEPTED ONLY AFTER
GREAT PRESSURE AND PERSUASION FROM PARTY LEADERS AND WHO AT
37 WILL BE KERALA'S YOUNGEST CHIEF MINISTER, WILL BE SWORN IN
WITH HIS NEW CABINET ON APRIL 26. NOT A MEMBER OF THE STATE
ASSEMBLY, ANTONY MUST BE ELECTED TO THE ASSEMBLY WITHIN SIX
MONTHS.

2. C. SUBRAMANIAM, DEPUTY BY THE CONGRESS HIGH COMMAND
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TO HELP THE KPCC IN THE CHOICE OF A SUCCESSOR TO KARUNAKARAM,
TOLD PRESSMEN IN TRIVANDRUM ON APRIL 25 THAT THE OTHER
PARTNERS OF THE RULING COALITION FRONT HAD ENDORSED ANTONY'S
CHOICE AS THE NEXT CHIEF MINISTER. SUBRAMANIAM FURTHER STATED
THAT WHEN HE ARRIVED IN TRIVANDRUM ON APRIL 24 HE WAS PESSIMISTIC
THAT ANTONY WOULD ACCEPT. HOWEVER, PERSUASION AND PRESSURE
CLINCHED THE ISSUE.

3. COMMENT: ANTONY TOLD US WHEN WE SAW HIM IN COCHIN
LAST JANUARY THAT HE WOULD NOT SEEK RE-ELECTION TO THE STATE
ASSEMBLY SINCE HE WANTED TO DEVOTE FULL TIME TO PARTY WORK.
IN FACT HE HAD EARLIER REJECTED THE OFFER OF A MINISTERSHIP
UNDER THE PREVIOUS ACHUTHA MENON MINISTRY. THERE WAS NO LEADER
OF ANTONY'S STATURE AND POPULARITY IN THE CONGRESS, ACCEPTABLE
NOT ONLY TO THE CONGRESS LEGISLATORS BUT ALSO TO THE OTHER
COALITION PARTNERS, TO SUCCEED KARUNAKARAN. HIS CHOICE
THUS WAS NOT UNEXPECTED, ALTHOUGH HIS WILLINGNESS TO
ACCEPT THE CHIEF MINISTERSHIP WAS IN FACT IN QUESTION.
FORTHRIGHT AND HONEST, ANTONY IS KNOWN FOR THE COURAGE OF HIS
CONVICTIONS AND HIS STRENGTH OF CHARACTER. HOWEVER, ON THE
SURFACE HE SEEMS TO LACK THE STATESMANSHIP AND ADMINISTRATIVE
EXPERIENCE NEEDED TO LEAD A COALITION COMPRISED OF DIVERSE
INTERESTS. ANTONY FACES A MORE DIFFICULT TASK THAN HIS
PREDECESSORS SINCE HE MUST NOT ONLY HOLD THE RULING FRONT
TOGETHER BUT WORK OUT A SATISFACTORY CENTER/STATE
RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DESAI GOVERNMENT. SIGNED MCCASKILL
UNQUOTE
SCHNEIDER

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NNN

Message Attributes

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